

THREE COUNT[©]

Volume 1, Number 27

March 24, 1992

Ringboy Returns

Cole, WWF Reach Settlement on Sexual Harassment Claim

By ALEX MARVEZ
Three Count Editor

Tom Cole, the 21-year-old ringboy whose claims of sexual abuse by former World Wrestling Employees garnered national attention, has decided not to pursue legal action in exchange for back pay retribution and his old job back.

Cole, a Utica, N.Y., resident who worked for the WWF from 1985-90, made his decision March 15 after a five-hour meeting with promotion owner Vince McMahon. Cole returned to work in the WWF March 16, and attended a taping of the Donahue show with WWF employees Basil DeVito and Elizabeth Poffo (The Lovely Elizabeth) which involved allegations of homosexual harassment against the WWF. Cole and brother, Lee, were reportedly set to defend the WWF had his name been brought up by the guest panel of wrestlers and wrestling media, but Cole was not discussed.

Cole's return signals an abrupt about-face from claims made in earlier stories written by *The New York Post's* Phil Mushnick and *San Diego Union-Tribune's* Jeff Savage. Mushnick, the first reporter to contact Cole and fellow ex-ringboy Chris Loss, wrote the first story on the harassment claims. Mushnick did not use the ex-ringboys' names, but said one (Cole) was set to file a lawsuit in New York Federal Court charging the WWF with transporting minors across state lines for the purpose of moral corruption and for violating child-labor laws.

Savage identified both ex-ringboys in his March 11 story, detailing their sexual harassment claims. Cole said a WWF employee would film him with a video camera while fondling the boys' feet and masturbating. Cole said he was fired in February 1990 after refusing the advances of a third WWF employee. The three WWF employees were Pat Patterson, Terry Garvin and Mel Phillips.

Cole has not retracted the statements made, but is unavailable for further comment, according to his attorney, Alan Fuchsberg. Cole agreed to return for \$50,000 in back retribution for the two years he was unemployed by the WWF, and his former spot back on the ring-assembly crew. The cash settlement is not based upon the average salary of a ringboy, but "based upon the new job he had been offered" before the firing. Attempts to determine what that position is proved fruitless March 23, as WWF spokesman Steve Planamenta would not



WWF owner Vince McMahon, shown in a 1988 photo, reached a settlement March 15 with former ringboy Tom Cole.

Vale Captures PWF Crown

By CARLOS REY
and DR. MIKE LANO
Three Count Staff

MIAMI -- Bart Vale defeated Yoshiaki Fujiwara March 17 to become the heavyweight champion of the Pro Wrestling Fujiwara shoot-fighting promotion before an estimated crowd of 2,100 fans at the James L. Knight Center.

The show was the first-ever shoot-fighting card held in the United States. Shoot-fighting combines kick boxing with karate and amateur wrestling to create a sport that has found a large hard-core
(Continued on Page 3)

Briefly...

• **Warrior back?:** This has not been confirmed, but the rumor mill is cranking up about the possible return of **The Ultimate Warrior** to the World Wrestling Federation. The speculation stems from the announcement on the March 23 Prime Time Wrestling show that clips of **Hulk Hogan's** match against The Warrior from *Wrestlemania VI* would air March 29 on a special tribute show to Hogan (USA, 7 p.m.). The Warrior defeated Hogan for the WWF title at *WM VI*, so why air match highlights?

• **Hart likely IC champ:** Expect **Bret Hart** to defeat **Roddy Piper** April 5 at *Wrestlemania VIII* to regain the WWF Intercontinental title. The decision was basically etched in stone by the WWF's announcement that **Shawn Michaels** will face the winner of the Hart-Piper match April 7 at a Superstars of Wrestling taping in Toledo, Ohio. Piper will not be wrestling in the

(Continued on Page 2)

(Continued on Page 2)

Inside...

Hanlin column -- Pg 4
Rey's Lucha -- Pg 5
Letters -- Pg 6-7
Wilson int. -- Pg 8-9
Closing notes -- Pg 10

Ringboy Returns

(Continued from Page 1)

return phone calls. Dave Meltzer's March 23 issue of the *Wrestling Observer Newsletter* quotes Fuchsberg as saying McMahon had tears in his eyes during the meeting with Cole, and told him he had been molested as a child as well.

Cole's action generated an explosive response from Mushnick, who lambasted the WWF March 18 in an 80-inch column headlined "Sex Lies and The WWF" on the front page of the *Post*. In the scathing piece, Mushnick called Cole a "sell-out" and compared McMahon to Hannibal Lecter, the cannibalistic murderer in the critically-acclaimed *Silence of The Lambs*. The WWF is reportedly researching a lawsuit because of the article, and Fuchsberg already sent a letter of complaint to *Post* sports editor Bob Decker. Some of the excerpts:

"After meeting with my client, I am convinced Mr. McMahon and his wife, Linda, believe Tom Cole and, to my knowledge, he has not since said what Mr. Cole alleged was untrue, but only that he had taken steps to be sure such things did not re-occur in the WWF. Tom Cole had spent six years working at the WWF and is a person of outstanding character and capability...His return to the WWF was not a sell-out, but a positive personal choice by a young man to move forward with his life and return to an exciting career which he loved.

"Obviously, Vince McMahon is trying to save the company, and in doing so, continues to fight those who attacked him. However, this should not be confused with what my client and I perceive as a definite effort on the part of the WWF to straighten out the problems that may have existed there and make the company squeaky clean from here on in. The WWF's appeal is to youngsters, among others, and it is their interest to so straighten out their act. Those who want to bring the WWF to its knees will not understand. But to those whose interest is to see change at the WWF, then Tom should be viewed as a person who had the dignity to reject sexual harassment and come forward about it. The effect of him and other employees doing so has been for the good as it has changed the company."

As for Cole's original comments, Planamenta would not

THREE COUNT®

Alex Marvez. Editor/Publisher
Carol Hernandez. Production
Paul Hanlin Jr. Columnist
Carlos Rey. Lucha Libre
John Muse. Japan

Three Count is a weekly professional wrestling newsletter published every Tuesday. Price for subscription is \$6 for one month, \$18 for three months, \$33 for six months and \$66 for one year. Please address all subscription checks to Three Count at P.O. Box 12795, Gainesville, Fla., 32604-0795.

comment in a March 19 interview. "Tom Cole stood up for what he believed in," he said. "Tom Cole has been made happy, and that's all that matters."

Briefly...

(Continued from Page 1)

WWF after Wrestlemania, returning to the broadcasting booth, and angles have already been shot for a Michaels-Hart feud.

Other matches on the Toledo show include Randy Savage vs. Ric Flair; Money Inc. (Ted DiBiase-Irwin R. Shyster) vs. Sergeant Slaughter-Jim Duggan; The Undertaker vs. Sid Justice and The Natural Disasters (Earthquake-Typhoon) vs. The Nasty Boys. The WWF is doing a Wrestling Challenge taping in April 8 in Kalamazoo, Mich., but a line-up of matches has not yet been released. Thanks to *Three Count* Japan columnist John Muse for the information.

• **New WCW Format:** The normal Saturday World Championship Wrestling telecast on TBS will be replaced by WCW Saturday Night beginning April 4. The show will bear a similarity to the WWF's Prime Time Wrestling format, with Jim Ross and another WCW announcer (not sure if it is Jesse Ventura or Tony Schiavone) introducing clips of matches while sitting inside the ring at the Center Stage studio in Atlanta (one side of the ring will have the ropes removed, so the camera can film easier. The first of the new shows was taped March 18, and from most accounts was a disaster.

• **WCW TV in St. Pete:** WCW will hold a television taping May 1 in St. Petersburg at the Bayfront Center. WCW is now doing its World Wide Wrestling tapings on Friday's to accommodate Ventura's schedule. WCW also has an April 30 date set for the West Palm Beach Fairgrounds.

• **SST, Maulers, Kelly in WWF:** The Samoan Swat Team has entered the WWF as a babyface tag-team, and The Maulers (Jack Victory and Rip Morgan) are in as heels. Yes, times are tough in the WWF's tag-team ranks. Also new is Kevin Kelly, who will feud with The Big Boss Man as The Convict.

• **Beefcake suspended?:** Brutus Beefcake has reportedly been suspended by the WWF, but confirmation of the report could not be confirmed with WWF officials. Beefcake has been noticeably absent on WWF telecasts recently, and was supposed to be an intricate part of the Hogan-Sid Justice match at WM VIII.

• **Roberts going to WCW?:** Jake Roberts met with WCW officials March 18 before the group's television taping. Roberts, though, reportedly used the meeting for bargaining power with the WWF, and is nowhere near agreeing to enter WCW.

• **Scotty gets chance:** WCW has signed Scotty "The Body" Anthony, who will debut under the name "Scotty Flamingo" in May and feud with Brian Pillman over WCW's light-heavyweight title.

Vale Takes PWF Title From Fujiwara

(Continued from Page 1)

audience among pro wrestling fans in Japan who enjoy the realistic style. Matches are fought in a wrestling ring, although the ropes are not used like in "worked" U.S.-style matches. Boxing gloves are not worn, and punches or kicks to the face and groin are not allowed. Open-hand punches are permitted. While matches are pre-determined, most fans -- both U.S. and Japanese -- do not know, because the moves are sold so well. The sport draws professional wrestling fans in Japan because many of its stars, like Fujiwara and Masaharu Funaki, have experience in the pro game.

The Miami show featured the first amateur matches ever held on a shoot-fighting show, featuring members of Vale's shoot-fighting school (the only one in the U.S.). Before the bouts began, the rules of shoot-fighting were explained. A match is won via submission or by five knockdowns. For every three times the ring ropes are used to break a submission hold, a knockdown is counted.

1) **Richard Carle** defeated **Gus Garcia** in a referee's decision, because Carle had more knockdowns in the 10-minute time limit. Carle juiced after a Garcia kick, and the crowd went wild. It was smart placing two flyweights in the ring to start, because they garnered the crowd's attention in a hurry. Not only were they hooked to the style early (which was a relief), but by the end of the evening, people in ties and cocktail dresses were popping for every takedown. Carle administered five enzuiguris (kicks to the back of the head, a.k.a. **Bad News Brown's** ghetto blaster) and three knockdowns.

2) **Ozzie Alvarez** topped **Pedro Goderich** in 9:50 when Goderich didn't raise his hands in a fighting position after rising from a knockdown to beat a 10-count (another way to lose a match). Both gave 100 percent, but used plenty of restholds because neither has been working the style for too long.

3) **Herman Cieciedo** fought **John Lana** to a 10-minute draw. Cieciedo looks to have the most potential and was the most over with the crowd, which was surprisingly 50 percent female.

4) **Jerry Flynn** defeated **Kazuo Takahashi** in 11:02 after recording five knockdowns. The two had a major stare down before the match, provoking the first of many "USA" chants heard the rest of the evening. The televised ads said, "Come watch the U.S. beat the Japanese," so the audience was primed. Rey said this was the best match on the show.

5) **Yusuke Fuke** defeated **Berto Dieuseul** (i.e. **Caribbean Kid Berto** from Suncoast Pro Wrestling and International Wrestling Federation fame) via leglock submission. Berto is very quick, and got some great crowd pops with enzuiguris and slaps that matched every one he received from Fuke, a legitimate tough guy.

6) Funaki (Japan's heart-throb) made **Mack Roesch** submit in 12:19 in a match filled with plenty suplexes and

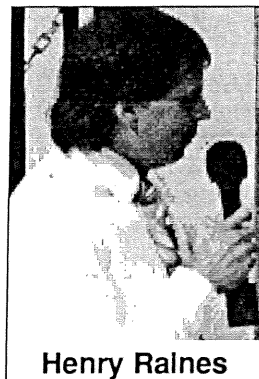
takedowns. Funaki was booed, but told Lano he didn't care because he received the same treatment while wrestling in Europe, and his popularity in Japan is second only to **Akira Maeda** in the shoot-fighting style.

7) **Ken Shamrock** (who was extremely over with the crowd) got the biggest victory of his career by making legendary **Minoru Suzuki** submit in 21:06. After those two had a stare down, Shamrock provoked a "USA" chant out of the audience that lasted throughout the match and several minutes after.

8) Vale defeated Fujiwara in 12:13 after administering a suplex and two headbutts, which knocked Fujiwara from the ring, where he couldn't answer the 10-count. Fujiwara made great heel expressions, which rocked the crowd into plenty of "USA" and "Bart" chants. The victory elevates Vale to main-event status and is, by far, the biggest victory of his career.

Notes: Fujiwara, Funaki, Suzuki and **Roberto Duran** held a press conference earlier in the day announcing Duran's April 19 match against Funaki in Tokyo. Duran, a former

boxing champion, was grossly overweight, checking in at about 240-250 pounds, when his normal fighting weight ranges from 160-175. He also proceeded to demolish umpteen bags of Cheetos and other snack foods during the show. Duran, though, is legendary for cutting incredible amounts of weight before fights (which, as any trainer will tell you, is the worst thing you can do, because it drains your strength badly). Duran was introduced to the crowd, stood up and then sat back down in his



Henry Raines

front row seat. He could have been used a lot better, since he is a legend (especially in Miami)...Suncoast owner **Henry Raines** was the guest ring announcer. Raines, who uses Flynn and former PWF star Jumbo Baretta on his shows, was the first U.S. promoter to hold shoot-fighting matches on wrestling shows. ...**Karl Gotch** didn't make an appearance like most expected he would. Gotch, 67, is the father of this style, although he abhors the kicking and believes the sport should stress more suplexes and submission holds. Gotch had a falling out with the PWF at one point because of the direction the style was taking, but the two sides have reconciled...Gimmicks sold included Zubaz-style pants, Vale vitamins, programs, hats and T-shirts at reasonable prices. Merchandise can still be purchased from Vale. Call (305) 266-1601 for information on merchandise or tapes of the show...Vale hopes to bring shoot-fighting back to Miami or Tampa this summer. Judging by the huge success here, let's hope it happens.

It's Time For Buck to Stop in WWF

(A correction from last issue: The sexual harassment lawsuit I mentioned last week was not actually filed, but rather was Phil Mushnick's announcement of the pending lawsuit by Tom Cole in *The New York Post*.).

"There are none so blind as those who will not see." --Anonymous

"Money talks and bullshit walks." --Ozzie Myers, talking to an undercover cop posing as a phony Arab sheik

Paul Hanlin Jr.

during the Abscam sting operation of the late 70s, one of five U.S. Congressmen convicted of black-mail and bribery.



"The buck stops here." --Harry Truman, 1948

"Of course you know, this means war!" --Bugs

Bunny

You've got a point there, Bugs; for the Evil Empire is back.

The time has come to declare war on Vince McMahon and his WWF. They are glorified drug dealers moving into our neighborhoods, spreading their poison of steroid use. Of alleged pedophilia. Of lies, lies and, of course, lies. And not to fear; when things get dicey, they simply pay off someone who wimps out when push comes to shove.

McMahon is worse than anyone Mushnick can compare him to. If the Medellin, Columbia drug cartel needs a few good men, they should look no further than Stamford, CT. He is stone cold evil.

And he's winning.

It would take lots to top his Persian Gulf wartie-in to Wrestlemania VII, but he did it without blinking an eye, smelling like a rose to the lemmings and sheep that are us, folks; us, educated by the same Mr. McMahon - that wrestling is nothing more than theater and a charade to start with.

I read all the lurid details in this newsletter and the *Pro Wrestling Torch*. It made me sick. Sick and disgusted enough to disassociate myself with this whole business. But after that initial feeling, it only strengthened my resolve. McMahon has got to go. Not just out of the wrestling business; but out of society and into the one and only place now worthy of him.

Prison. . .

It will now take the Feds to bring McMahon to his knees, now that the news media has dispensed their 15 minutes of fame to pro wrestling and moved on to much more important stuff, like March-April NCAA Tournament Madness and all those "for amusement only" office

pools.

As for Cole, he is a money-hungry hypocrite. *You were bought and paid for sir. Vince was duty-bound to offer \$50,000 of whiff blood money; it didn't mean you had to take it. You are the 1992 version of Friday to McMahon's Robinson Crusoe. Someone who will now have the rest of your days to ponder that sobering thought. Yes, you're rich. In every way but one.*

But the war isn't lost yet. Here are some suggestions we can do; don't spend one red, white or blue cent on any WWF ticket, any WWF video, any WWF foam two-by-four, any WWF "Hulk Rules" of anything, nor any WWF pay-per-view. Who knows, you may have already paid for Vince's latest purchase.

Say, about \$50,000. . .

Who really knows just where your money is going, people? All the mucho *dinero* spent on WWF paraphernalia, the PPVs, the whole ball of wax. Maybe it goes to finance the boys' steroid habits. Those that are still around, that is, as junior's "steroid testing plan" continues to draw praise from every corner of the sport. . . not.

Better yet, write to advertisers of products shown on WWF TV shows. Say you won't spend your money on them, *unless they pull out*. And to correspondents who send in match reports to various sheets, how about this; no coverage of any WWF match? Ever. They've said time immemorial they aren't pro wrestling. It's high time we took them at their word.

The alternative is this; do you want to look in the mirror the morning after you've supported an organization who will do anything to survive? One that promotes breaking the law by encouraging the use of illegal performance-enhancing drugs? One that has had man after man state-- *for the record*-- that they were victims of sexual molestation and harassments by male WWF executives? To an organization that denies its ticket holders their First Amendment rights at TV tapings and house shows simply because they don't tow the party line?

It's time to take the neighborhood back. This gutless wonder is counting on your continued apathy. Vince is laughing at everyone looks the other way. Right now, in fact. *At you*.

Prove him wrong. Before he screws up the next generation of workers and fans the way he did with this one.

Or do you want to check your NCAA tournament pool and see how well you did today?

For amusement only, of course; the same as wrestling.

Paul Hanlin Jr., 29, is Three Count's lead columnist. And if you can't tell, the Philadelphia resident is a wee bit peeved at the World Wrestling Federation.

Salvaje Wins Second Hair Match; Machine-Panther Feud Begins

The only word I can think of to describe the March 22 lucha libre show on Galavision is one I'm sure many of your readers have seen me use quite often before -- incredible. Let's jump right into the action.

1) The show began with a clip of **America** (el tecnico) defeat-

Carlos Rey



ing **Fuerza Guerrera** (el rudo) for the CMML welterweight title. From what was shown, this must have been a great match. The wrestlers split the first two falls with submission victories. America won the third fall, but in a strange manner. Guerrera worked America into a submission hold, but accidentally pinned himself.

2) The tecnico team of **Love Machine** (Art Barr)-**Feloso**-**America** defeated **Blue Panther**-**Kung Fu-La Fiera** in two straight falls. This match was action-packed and featured the beginning (finally) of the feud between Machine and Panther. The two began brawling before the opening bell when Machine jumped Panther, and the two could not be separated despite the efforts of both teams. America forced Kung Fu to submit the first fall after applying a swinging backbreaker-type hold onto Fu's knee, Feloso pinned Fiera and Machine kept Panther from getting in the ring before a 10-count, giving the technicos the fall. The second fall began with Feloso and Fiera working together, but that didn't last very long as Panther and Machine began brawling again. Panther tried to remove Machine's mask, but instead, Machine ripped Panther's mask. When Feloso got close to Panther, he was fouled, awarding the fall and match to the technicos. Machine then tore Panther's mask off, which got the wrestling committee talking about sponsoring a mask vs. mask match between the two.

3) **El Satanico**-**MS 1**-**Pirata Morgan** (Los Rudos) defeated **Mascara Sagrada**-**Lizmark**-**Atlantis** (los technicos) in two straight falls. This match featured some of Mexico's best technical wrestlers (Lizmark and Atlantis). Through triple teaming, the rudos managed to pin Atlantis, then forced both Sagrada and Lizmark to submit. Lizmark also got the top of his mask torn in the process. The technicos finally began to reverse matters in the second

fall, with the rudos taking bumps outside the ring. The team captains -- Lizmark and Satanico -- went at each other hard, and just when it appeared Lizmark was set to win, Satanico applied a power bomb and got the pinfall.

4) **Canadian Vampire**-**Conan**-**Pero Aguayo** (technicos) defeated **Celn Caras**-**Sangre Chicana**-**Pierroth Jr.** The first fall saw both teams go after each other brutally, but that is to be expected with the grudge matches between Caras-Chicana vs. Conan-Aguayo over the past month. Aguayo was finally pinned by Caras, Vampire pinned by Chicana and Pierroth and Conan were eliminated. The technicos made a quick comeback in the second fall, again through sheer brawling. This style of match also brought about a funny incident as Chicana accidentally hit rudo referee **Gato Montini**, but he wasn't disqualified. Also, Chicana went into the seats to grab a glass bottle of Pepsi to use on the technicos, but the tecnico referee grabbed Chicana's arm and allowed Vampire to grab the bottle. Take note that around 1983-84, the beer vendors would walk right up to ringside selling their wares. Chicana once grabbed a bottle and broke it over his opponent's head. I don't know if it was a work, but it sure looked good.

For the second fall, Pierroth was pinned by Aguayo, and Chicana and Caras refused to enter the ring, tying the falls at one apiece. The technicos had control for most of the third fall, as Conan gave Pierroth a Samoan drop from the second rope for one pinfall. That left Chicana and Aguayo going at it, with the latter taking an incredible bump into the ringside chairs and Chicana leaping through the ropes onto him there. Vampire then pinned Caras after a powerslam.

5) The main event was a hair vs. hair match between **Bestia Salvaje** (rudo) and **Kato Kung Lee** (tecnico), which was won by Salvaje -- his second hair vs. hair victory in one month. Lee can't wrestle much, but Salvaje carried him well enough that this match didn't turn out so bad. Before the match began, they a clip of Lee signing the contract and then going to the gym to confront Salvaje, who laughed at him and called him an old man. Lee was seconded by **Ciclon Ramirez**; Salvaje by **Morgan**. The first fall didn't even last 90 seconds, as Lee made Salvaje submit with a type of stretch hold. Salvaje's youth took over in the second fall, with Salvaje administering holds I'm sure made Lee wish he was somewhere

(Continued on Page 9)

Letters to the Editor

Dear Alex,

As a friend, I'm sure you won't mind me telling you how I was both pleased and annoyed after reading your Issue 24 of **Three Count**.

At first, I was happy to learn you provided in-depth arena reports from both our Immokalee and Port St. Lucie shows. But then I was angered that you knew about my disagreement with Port St. Lucie High School.

Although I cannot and will not disclose actual facts and figures concerning the aforementioned high school, I do think you deserve some type of explanation, if only for the fact that you've pressed me on the subject since March 2.

Let me just say that both Ladies Major League Wrestling and the Port St. Lucie High School Parents Band Association had a contractual agreement that called for a certain payment to be made at the conclusion of the show March 1. It was understood that if we were to utilize only wrestlers from Florida, the show would be a certain price. If we had to bring more "name" talent to the show, it would cost more. And if we were to give them our "top" show (with talent from outside Florida), it would be still higher. They were to choose the type of show. Needless to say, they wanted and requested the "top" show. Yet when the show with loaded with name performers finished March 1, the Association was only willing to pay for the local show.

Because this matter has been turned over to our attorney for settlement, I am not at liberty to discuss this any further. However, more important than my disagreement with the Association over the payment, is the far reaching repercussions that a situation like this can lead to – the potential crippling of a small local or regional promotion.

Do you have any idea how embarrassing it is to stand in front of your talent and tell them you might not have enough money to make the night's payoffs? Thank goodness we did well in Immokalee the Friday before, and thank goodness some of the talent was cooperative. Nevertheless, when you have to post-date checks and ask some if it's okay to send money in a week or so, it leaves a bad taste in everybody's mouth. I don't like doing business that way because I didn't like it when it was done to me by a certain California promoter.

I'll be very honest with you. The entire Port St. Lucie incident left such a bad taste in my mouth that I thought after our April 20 show in Fort Lauderdale, that would be it. The jury is still out.

In hindsight, when the state of Florida was seeking to regulate professional wrestling to protect consumers and spectators from unscrupulous and fly-by-night

promoters-- of which I'm all in favor of-- there was absolutely nothing being done to protect promoters like myself from organizations that could conceivably put them out of business for failure of payment.

In reality, going to court doesn't satisfy anybody except the attorneys. And as far as the sympathy angle in concerned, if you were a judge, who would you rule in favor of: The XYZ Wrestling Association or the Crippled and Blind Toxic Shock Anorexic Abused Children's Foundation?

I can only surmise that should it ever come to pass that regulation is once again sought here in Florida - while some scream and yell about the poor conditions wrestlers face, while others complain about steroid, drug and sexual abuse, and when the state tries to levy taxes, collect fees on various licenses and tries to regulate advertising -- that someone in Tallahassee should also examine the real consequences promoters face when it comes to putting on "guaranteed" shows.

-- Howard Brody

President of Ladies Major League Wrestling
Sunrise, FL

Dear Alex,

Although I'm "only" 40 years old, I have been an avid fan of pro wrestling for more than 32 years. Obviously, I've seen many changes to the sport over the years, but I believe the current cloud of illegal drug and steroid abuse along with promiscuous "lifestyles" hanging over the WWF and WCW will no doubt send shockwaves throughout the industry.

Massive changes will have to take place over the next year. The changes will include in-ring product as well as promotional and marketing strategies. The physical appearance of the wrestlers will be altered, and the U.S. audience will be trained to react like a Japanese crowd. This will not be accomplished overnight, but I expect to see a major facelift in the U.S. version of the sport within the next six months.

From my personal perspective, I look forward to these changes. I believe the current state of U.S. pro wrestling is analogous to that of a monster created in the laboratory which has gotten so out-of-control that the mad scientist no longer has the reins on the situation, and the monster is about to turn on his creator. Clearly, the monster must be destroyed before the entire laboratory blows up.

-- Gary Kramer
West Hollywood, CA

Dear Alex,

I have some questions for you.

1. What's going to happen to the Ric Flair-Randy Savage-Elizabeth thing?

2. Will Elizabeth leave Savage at Wrestlemania?

3. Who is Sting going to feud with next?

4. Will Shawn Michaels face Marty Jannetty at Wrestlemania?

5. In my estimation, if they have a special referee for the Hogan-Justice match, I think they should have Zeus as the referee and have him feud with Justice later on. What do you think?

Also, I saw the picture Flair showed about his affair with Elizabeth. To me, it almost looked like a picture by an artist. What are your thoughts on this?

--Joe Sena
Tallahassee, FL

AM: In order:

1-2) Don't expect the Liz-Savage-Flair triangle to end anytime soon. With the indefinite departure of Hulk Hogan after Wrestlemania VIII, the WWF is severely lacking a top babyface. Savage will attempt to fill the role, although I doubt he will be very successful simply because he has been in the WWF for too long. I don't expect Liz to leave Savage again, because it could make Flair a more popular babyface than Hogan ever was. The photos look fairly doctored, but I think the concept is great and enough fans will buy the pictures as being legitimate to add heat to the feud (but no one knows if they will show up at the arenas).

3) Sting will feud with Big Van Vader throughout April and early May, and has a few matches scheduled against Steve Austin as well. Also, look for Sting-Ricky Steamboat vs. Austin-Rick Rude matches in late April.

4) Janetty is indefinitely suspended from the WWF after being arrested January 26 on cocaine possession charges.

5) Zeus was let go from the WWF because he was a royal pain to work with, showing up late to scheduled appearances. Not knowing how to wrestle didn't help. The guest referee stipulation was dropped, although I think Lex Luger would have been a good choice for the role.

Dear Alex,

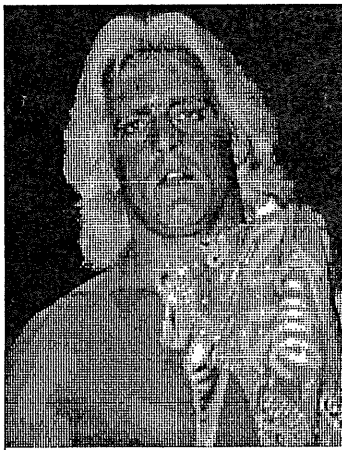
In regards to the answer to my question regarding Curtis Hughes in Issue __, you need a Georgia map going west from Atlanta. Taking the most direct route, which is I-85, you pass through Fayette, Coweta and

Meriwether counties before reaching Troop. No more bullshit. It hurts your credibility.

I grew up in Columbus, GA. My degree from a small state college in Georgia is in history and education, which is to say I know a little Georgia history and geography. I also spent 15 of the last 18 years working most of Georgia.

I would think journalism school would have taught you better.

--Jim Russell
Orlando, FL



Ric Flair

AM: I apologize for the error. I was told by someone in the Fulton County Sheriff's Office a few months back that Troop County was the next county over. Obviously, they (and I) were wrong. In next week's issue, I will print whether Hughes was arrested in any of those counties.

Also, to clarify a letter from Jim written to me a few weeks back, Nikita Koloff did not debut at SuperBrawl II like I reported in the March 1 issue of *The Miami Herald*. I was told he was scheduled to, but his debut was delayed until the post-match press conference shown on television the following week. Because of my deadline, the column must be turned in three days early, and no changes in the column can be made after 7:30 p.m. Saturday. Thus, the mistake appeared, and was corrected the next weekend.

Sheet Spotlight

Here's a look at the top stories of some of the other wrestling newsletters, with subscription information:

• **Dave Meltzer's Wrestling Observer Newsletter** (March 23): A complete account of the allegations surrounding homosexual harassment in the WWF, including first-person accounts of the Donahue show; A comprehensive and informative letters page; One of the best Observers ever. *Weekly; \$1.50 an issue. P.O. Box 1228, Campbell CA 95009-1228.*

• **Wade Keller's Pro Wrestling Torch** (March 19): Comprehensive coverage of WWF sex allegations, included summaries of articles in *The Oregonian* and *San Diego Union-Tribune* that did not appear in *Three Count*. Also, a complete transcript of the Bruno Sammartino-Barry Orton-Vince McMahon interview on *Larry King Live*. A must-see issue. *Weekly; \$1.25 an issue. P.O. Box 201844, Minneapolis MN 55420.*

• **John Arezzi's Pro Wrestling Spotlight Weekly** (March 23): Powerful interview with Ken Patera concerning the WWF; News from various promotions. *Weekly; \$1.50 an issue (Free sample available). 99 Middle Country Road, Coram, NY 11727.*

• **Jody Boyns's New England Wrestling Scene** (February 24): Comprehensive summaries of all WCW, WWF and GWF weekly telecasts, and TV ratings as well; Up-to-date wrestling news and gossip. *Bi-weekly; Approximately \$5.8 an issue (Free sample available). 521 Pine St. Apt. 304, Manchester, N.H. 03104.*

Spotlight on: Jim Wilson

*With so much publicity surrounding the allegations of sexual harassment being sounded by former World Wrestling Federation grapplers and employees, **Three Count** would be remiss not to take a look back and focus on the person whose original claims of sexual harassment rocked the wrestling world in 1985 -- **Jim Wilson**.*

*Wilson, a former collegiate and professional football player, says he would not succumb to the sexual advances of **Jim Barnett**, a long-time National Wrestling Alliance promoter who is now employed by World Championship Wrestling. The details of Wilson's story caused quite a stir upon their unveiling on the 20/20 show in 1985, where pro wrestling was revealed as pre-determined entertainment. And while Wilson's name has faded from the spotlight, he is still working to make his story heard. Wilson appeared on **Ric Carter's WrestleTalk** show from KLAV in Las Vegas March 1, and the following is a transcript of what was said. **Three Count** hopes to have Barnett's response for next week's issue, as well as the remainder of Wilson's transcript, which includes his ideas about unionizing pro wrestlers. Whether Wilson's claims, some quite essentric, are completely true is hard to say. But the difficulties of running independent shows opposite the established promotions in the 1970s and '80s has been well chronicled elsewhere, and the interview provides an insight on subjects still prevalent in wrestling today.*

RC: Jim, how did you get started in wrestling?

JW: I was between the (Atlanta) Falcons and going to the Los Angeles Rams when I got introduced to the Atlanta promoter, **Ray Gunkel**. He essentially said, "We can make you a star. You have everything it takes to be a world champion, as far as legitimate credentials, athletic background, look and talent." I decided to give it a try.

RC: Many people are familiar with **Ray Gunkel**. He died in the ring of a heart attack, is that correct?

JW: Yes, in 1972 in a match with **Ox Baker**, he died. That's something we are trying to establish here in the Georgia area, as far as medical and safety enhancement to performers, without any luck I might add.

RC: You were wrestling for how many years before you were blackballed?

JW: I started in 1968, and came back each winter and wrestled. I was blackballed in 1973. During that period of time, everything was going along fairly smoothly based on the way **Ray Gunkel** envisioned it. Of course, he died and that's when the problems began.

RC: I understand you were propositioned by an individual while wrestling in Australia.

JW: That's right. I was wrestling in Australia for **Jim Barnett** and got propositioned by him sexually. I turned it down, and from that point on, they made me lose every night, cut my money and cut my trip short. I figured, good riddance. I came back to Georgia, and **Barnett** was in the progress of buying out (the Georgia territory) from **Lester Welch**, who was **Buddy Fuller's** cousin. I never was able to get back and get established in this area for the NWA.

RC: You had also mentioned that you were working with **Ann Gunkel** (Ray's wife, who continued promoting after her husband's death) for a brief time, and then **Tom Renesto** came in?

JW: **Renesto** was the booker, and he had it for about one year since Ray died. It was early 1974, and I was going to start with them because they were trying to

recruit anyone who could work for them. It didn't take very long to figure out that **Renesto** had been bought and paid for by **Barnett** and the NWA to put **Ann** out of business. **Thunderbolt Patterson** and I decided to start our own promotion, thinking we could do as well as those guys were doing. We ran into all the road blocks.

RC: What were those road blocks?

JW: They have a monopoly on the business. They control all the public auditoriums with illegal exclusive leases, try to buy wrestlers off, threaten some with reporting VISA card violations, put hecklers in the crowd, promote the same night against you in the same town and do it for free...They used every tactic they possibly could to put you out of business.

RC: You had mentioned to me at one point your group had the **Omni** booked?

JW: We did. That was when the main thing for the other guys was trying to keep us out of the big buildings. No (independent) had ever had a card at the **Omni** and done any good there. **T-Bolt** and I were over. We were real hot, the fans supported us and (the other promoters) knew this, and knew if we could generate money and keep the thing going, we could attract a lot of other big name wrestlers to come in, because we were going to split the gate with the guys 50-50 and also set up benefits similar to what the NFL had. (The other promoters) tried to keep us out at any and all costs. We had a fiasco at the **Omni**. After finally getting it booked through a promoter, they bought the promoter off who also had other dates lined up for us up and down the eastern seaboard. We had a projected \$1 million take in a 30-day period. The rock bands in those days would go into a new market every other day and put on a big show. They would pre-sell the show in advance by about 10 days to two weeks so it wouldn't get old in people's minds. We would have proven it could work at the **Omni**. After threatening to burn our cars on the city hall front lawn, **T-Bolt** and I were finally able to wrangle the date at the **Omni** promised to us a month earlier. They

then bought off the Omni manager for \$25,000, a fact later substantiated in testimony by Ann Gunkel, because he bragged about it to her. They closed the gates at 8:30 p.m. when we had more than 9,000 people and \$30,000 in the house. That completely blew their minds, what are capabilities were and what we were trying to do with the business.

RC: I understand there were threats against you perhaps and your family. They even killed a dog of yours?

JW: The night before the show, threats were made at my home, my tires were slashed and my German shepherd was killed and put under my bedroom window. They tried to send a message to us, and we didn't get it obviously. We went through all the heartaches and headaches and hassle people can give you when they're against you.

RC: Basically, as far as wrestling is concerned, there's no Constitution, no Bill of Rights, nothing.

JW: Well, what I was referring to is the fact that this country is founded on and based on those things. These promoters, mainly Ted Turner and Vince McMahon, are trying to deregulate the states which provide protection on behalf of the wrestlers. They're tearing down any protection from a safety or medical standpoint. They got wrestling deregulated in recent years in Pennsylvania and California, they kept regulation out of Florida, and this is the eighth year in Georgia we've tried to get a bill passed to protect the guys in some form or fashion. They have paid off everyone from the governor in Georgia to people back in Washington to keep this thing under wraps and make sure the guys don't get something of a protective nature in place.

RC: Those are some pretty strong allegations. When you say "they" paid people off, who are you referring to?

JW: Well, Barnett is known to be one of the biggest pay-off guys. I fought him for 10 years, and was finally able to get a settlement out of him. Nothing close to what I should have gotten, because they bankrupted Georgia Championship Wrestling, the main defendant in the suit, and Jim Barnett personally bankrupted as well and left the state. He went to McMahon's group and worked there for a couple of years until he was run off and came back to work for Turner. This all came out in testimony. Barnett even bragged to T-Bolt and I on the phone that when we went to the NAACP and SCLC, he told me, "Don't start no nigger bulls--- with me, because I've got Andy Young in my back pocket and the pictures to prove it." This was in 1982, just prior to when Andy was elected as mayor. There is a long history of non-compliance and help as far as pro wrestlers go, regardless of their race, culture or religion. They've paid off local politicians. It all came out in testimony and in disposition form.

RC: So it's public record as far as regulation goes...

JW: The fact we've tried establishing a bill is a matter of public record. Turner has put up big-time money back here to get this bill killed. They use every phony-baloney excuse to get bill killed. It finally got to the governor's desk after five years, and he had been promising all along to sign it and put it into effect. Then he came up with the lame-brain excuse there was not enough money in the pro wrestling business to incorporate it into being part of the state (Editor's note: This was one of the arguments of WWF lobbyist Jim Tillman last January at the Committee on Regulated Industries meeting that voted down regulation of wrestling in Florida). Atlanta has a boxing commission that does nothing but drain money from the state. It doesn't generate any funds from a positive standpoint. Evander Holyfield endorses our bill, as well as several congressman, the NFL Players Association and the current mayor of Atlanta. We've gotten through everyone we needed to go through, but we can't get the job done. (The state) came up with a false report on the income and potential income of pro wrestling. When we told the people at the Office of Planning and Budgeting what was going on, they turned their cheek and looked the other way. We threatened to sue the state on the Open Record Act to get them to hand in the report that substantiated what the governor had, and it had been completely falsified. We've gone just about as far as we can possibly go with it.

Reporte de Lucha Libre...

(Continued from Page 5)

else. Bestia then gained a quick pinfall. The third fall was give-and-take, with Lee applying a submission hold out of nowhere that forced Salvaje to cry uncle. However, Montini, as every lucha fan knows, won't accept the submission. A member of the committee rose and began scolding Montini. Salvaje managed to escape, apply a version of the power bomb, administer a splash onto Lee from the top rope and gain the pinfall. And once again -- as you can imagine -- the crowd was not too happy.

*Carlos Rey has watched lucha libre for more than 10 years, and cannot get enough of the style. He not only writes a weekly column for **Three Count.**, but, in addition, has tapes of Galavision shows available. Write to him at 996 West 45th Place, Hialeah FL 33012 for more information. He is hoping to begin receiving tapes of the UWA by the end of March. Look for more details soon.*

Next issue: *Three Count's* first (and possibly last, judging by what's happening in the WWF) Wrestlemania preview. Also, more goodies on the WWF and sexual harassment charges. I also have planned a story on **Teddy Long** and WCW's new community service plan, plus the return of my "Sunshine State News" column and **John Muse's** "Musings From Japan," regular columns from **Paul Hanlin Jr.** and **Carlos Rey**, plus letters and the conclusion of the Spotlight interview with **Jim Wilson**.

I also want to thank **Dr. Mike Lano**, **Art Peluso**, and **Gary and Charles Penn** for their help on the past few issues of *Three Count* through providing documentation to photographs. Also, since some of you have asked, back issues are available. Just drop me a line of which issues are requested and I will just mark them off your current subscription. By using smaller type fonts in places, I have been able to fit more news while keeping at 10 pages. Issue 25-26, which was 18 pages, would have ranged between 20-22 had I kept the same size of print consisting throughout most of the last newsletters. If anyone objects to the new style of inting or has any suggestions, please let me know.

Three Count Professional Wrestling Newsletter©
P.O.Box 12795
Gainesville, FL 32604-0795